

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-06 CA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 SY-05 EB-08 MCT-01
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P R 300920Z NOV 77
FM ANCONSUL MEDAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 776
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY
INFO: RUMJHE/AMCONSUL SURABAYA 590

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MEDAN 0457

EO: 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, ID, CDES
SUBJ: TWO AMERICANS SHOT AT ARUN LNG SITE

REF: MEDAN 0454

1. ON MORNING OF NOVEMBER 30 CONSULATE OFFICERS HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH BECHTEL MEDAN MANAGER L. LEGG WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM THE ARUN SITE AND WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE DETAILS OF THE DEBRIEFING OF AMERICANS & KOREANS WHO WITNESSED NOV. 29 SHOOTING INCIDENT. ACCOUNT PARA 2, REFTEL PROVIDES BASIC DETAILS. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS GIVE ADDITIONAL DETAILS SUPPLIED BY LEGG.

2. LEGG EXPLAINED THAT ALTHOUGH LHOK SEUKON GAS FIELD HAS THREE AREAS THAT ARE FENCED IN AND SECURITY CONTROLLED FOR NORMAL WORK OPERATIONS, THERE ARE SEVERAL WELL LOCATIONS AT MORE ISOLATED AREAS FROM ONE TO EIGHT KILOMETERS OUTSIDE THE FENCED AREAS AND THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE AT ONE OF THESE WELL SITES. THE WELL SITE WAS, HOWEVER, ONLY ONE KILOMETER FROM THE SECURITY GATE LEADING INTO ONE OF THE MAIN FENCED AREAS, INDICATING A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DARING ON THE PART OF THE ARMED BAND. LEGG REPORTED
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THAT THERE WERE NO EXTRA INDONESIAN SECURITY FORCES AT LHOK SEUKON OTHER THAN THOSE HIRED PRIVATELY BY BECHTEL ITSELF. LOCAL POLICE PROVIDED ESCORT SERVICE FOR PAYROLL DAY AND HELPED OUT IF CALLED IN EMERGENCIES SUCH AS NOV. 29.

3. AT 1400 NOV. 29 A WORK GROUP CONSISTING OF THE TWO PREVIOUSLY NAMED AMERICANS, PERNICONE AND STAYER, TWO SOUTH KOREANS, AND SOME

TWENTY FIVE INDONESIANS WERE DOING EARTH EXCAVATION WORK AT THE WELL SITE WHEN 7-10 ARMED INDONESIANS WALKED INTO SITE. THEY WERE DRESSED IN INDONESIAN MILITARY GREEN FATIGUES (WHICH APPARENTLY CAN BE EASILY PURCHASED FROM USED CLOTHING VENDORS) AND ALL WERE ARMED WITH M-1 TYPE RIFLES AND HANDGUNS OF WORLD WAR I AND II VINTAGE. THEIR AVERAGE AGE WAS ESTIMATED BETWEEN 25-35 YEARS OLD. THEY SPOKE IN BOTH ACEHNESE AND INDONESIAN AND PASSED OUT MIMEOGRAPHED PAMPHLETS TO THE INDONESIAN MEMBERS OF THE WORK PARTY. THESE PAMPHLETS REPORTEDLY CONTAINED STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE EXPLOITATION OF ACEH WEALTH BY MOBIL; LEGG SAID HIS STAFF WAS STILL TRYING TO OBTAIN A GOOD TRANSLATION FROM THE POOR QUALITY MIMEOGRAPHED SHEETS. (CONSULATE HOPES TO OBTAIN COPY OF PAMPHLET SOON. SEPARATE AMERICAN SOURCE STATED THAT THERE WERE TWO DIFFERENT PAMPHLETS, IN BOTH ENGLISH AND INDONESIAN LANGUAGES, AND THAT ONE PAMPHLET PURPORTEDLY WAS FROM SOUTH MOLUCCAN GROUP IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT FOR ACEH/NLFA). LEGG HIMSELF WAS NONCOMMITTAL ON WHETHER PAMPHLETS SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED THE NAME OF THE ARMED GROUP. LEGG'S OWN OPINION WAS THAT BAND DEFINITELY AIMED ATTACK AT FOREIGNERS FOR POLITICAL REASONS AND THAT THE KOREAN AND THE AMERICAN WHO MANAGED TO RUN AND ESCAPE IN SWAMP/FOREST AREA WERE LUCKY INDEED. (STAYER WHO WAS SHOT IN BACK WAS OPERATED ON IN SINGAPORE AND IS REPORTED IN GOOD CONDITION) AFTER SHOOTING INCIDENT A BECHTEL DRIVER WAS FORCED TO DRIVE THEM IN BECHTEL VEHICLE A FEW KILOMETERS DOWN A SIDE ROAD WHERE THEY GOT OUT AND DISAPPEARED INTO THE BUSH. SINCE PERNICONE ABLE TO GET OFF MESSAGE OF SHOOTING VIA WALKIE TALKIE BEFORE HE WAS SHOT DEAD, OTHER

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BECHTEL OFFICIALS, INCLUDING LEGG, ARRIVED AT SITE WITHIN 15 MINUTES OF INCIDENT. AFTER SEALING OFF CAMP SITE, LOCAL POLICE BEGAN ARMED PATROLS OF THE AREA NIGHT OF 29.

4. LEGG SAID THAT IF INCIDENT HAD HAPPENED A YEAR AGO, EXPATRIATE EMPLOYEES PROBABLY WOULD HAVE LEFT EN MASSE BUT THAT WITH CUT BACK IN PERSONNEL AS CONSTRUCTION NEARS COMPLETION, HAD CORPS FOREIGN WORKERS REMAINING WOULD NOT BE FRIGHTENED OFF. HE SAID THAT NO MORE WORK WILL BE DONE AT THE ISOLATED WELL SITES, HOWEVER, UNTIL SUFFICIENT SECURITY IS PROVIDED BY LOCAL FORCES.

5. PRINCIPAL OFFICER DROPPED BY TO SEE DEPUTY KOWILHAN I (TERRITORIAL MILITARY COMMAND FOR SUMATRA/WEST KALIMANTAN) DEPTUY COMMANDER, BRIG. GENERAL SOEKOTJO, TO DISCUSS SITUATION INFORMALLY. GEN. SOEKOTJO APOLOGIZED FOR THE INCIDENT INVOLVING THE DEATH AND THE WOUNDING OF AMERICANS AND INDICATED THAT STRONG MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN TO TRACK DOWN THE ARMED GANG AND TO PROVIDE EXTRA PROTECTION AS NECESSARY TO LHOK SEUKON FIELD. SOEKOTJO INDICATED THAT AFTER THE JULY/AUGUST THREATS TO MOBIL FROM THE NLFA, ONE INDONESIAN SQUADRON OF ARMED TROOPS WAS STATIONED AT LHOK SEUMAWE, THE PLANT SITE WHICH IS ABOUT 30 KILOMETERS FROM THE GAS FIELD AT LHOK SUKON, A FEW EXTRA PEOPLE WERE ADDED TO ASSIST THE POLICE

FORCE AT LHOK SUKON, AND SECURITY SWEEPS WERE MADE OF THE ARUN AREA AND THE PIDI AREA NEAR THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF BANDA ACEH WHERE NLFA HAD BEEN ACTIVE BEFORE. OVER TWENTY ARRESTS OF SUSPECTS WERE MADE. SOEKOTJO STRESSED HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS, HOWEVER, TO ROUND UP ALL MEMBERS OF THE NLFA SINCE IT WAS SO EASY FOR THEM TO DISAPPEAR INTO ACEH'S EXTENSIVE AND LIGHTLY POPULATED FOREST AREA. SOEKOTJO, LIKE BECHTEL MANAGER LEGG, WAS UNABLE, OR UNWILLING, TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS OF THE

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-06 EB-08 CA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMCONSUL MEDAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 777

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

INFO RUMJHE/AMCONSUL SURABAYA 591

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MEDAN 0457

POLITICAL PAMPHLETS HANDED OUT BY THE ARMED BAND. HE DID INDICATE HIS OPINION THAT THESE WERE MEMBERS OF THE NLFA (AND NOT FROM KOMANDO JIHAD FOR EXAMPLE). HE HAD HEARD NO INFORMATION INDICATING A MOLUCCAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT INVOLVMENT AND RATHER DOUBTED SUCH A CONNECTION BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCE IN RELIGIONS OF THE TWO MOVEMENTS. SOEKOTJO PROMISED TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS NEXT WEEK WHEN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE SHOOTING INCIDENT HAD BEEN COMPLETED.

COMMENT: THE BECHTEL MANAGER WAS CONFIDENT THAT BECHTEL/MOBIL TIES WITH PERTAMINA AND INDONESIAN SECURITY FORCES WERE ADEQUATE FOR HANDLING ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SECURITY PROTECTION IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SHOOTING INCIDENT. CONSULATE BELIEVES THAT THESE COMPANIES DO INDEED HAVE GOOD CONNECTIONS IN THIS REGARD AND CERTAINLY DOES NOT WANT TO INTERFERE WITH THEM, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE AMERICAN COMPANIES ARE ANXIOUS TO SHOW FULL COOPERATION WITH THEIR INDONESIAN COUNTERPART, PERTAMINA. WE ARE CONCERNED, NONETHELESS, THAT IN SPITE OF THE JULY/AUGUST THREATS MADE BY THE NLFA AGAINST MOBIL, THE EXTRA INDONESIAN

SECURITY PROTECTION WENT ALMOST ENTIRELY TO THE PLANT SITE AT
LHOK SEUMAWE AND NOT TO THE LHOK SUKON GAS FIELD WHERE AS MUCH,
IF NOT MORE, DAMAGE CAN BE INFLICTED BY EVEN A SMALL BAND OF
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GUERRILLA TYPE FORCES. WE HAVE THUS TRIED TO ENCOURAGE INFORMALLY
AND IN A LOW KEY MANNER THROUGH KOWILHAN I THE NEED FOR FULL
COOPERATION OF INDONESIAN SECURITY OFFICIALS WITH BECHTEL/MOBIL
AND TO STRESS THAT EVEN A REPORTEDLY SMALL, DISORGANIZED AND POORLY
ARMED BAND OF FANATICS CAN CAUSE A LOT OF TROUBLE TO THE ARUN
PROJECT.
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